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General and complete disarmament

Letter dated 7 July 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a communication from Mr. I. S. Ivanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, addressed to you concerning the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the biennial meeting to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action, and also as a document of the General Assembly under item 74 of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-eighth session.

(*Signed*) Sergey **Lavrov**
Permanent Representative

* A/58/50/Rev.1 and Corr.1.

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Annex to the letter dated 7 July 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Russian Federation supports the work of the United Nations to resolve the global problem of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

We consider that the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in July 2001 at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is of the highest importance and is, in fact, the only functioning machinery for resolving this problem at the global level.

We welcome the steps to implement the Programme of Action at the international and regional levels. At the same time, we accept that the primary responsibility for controlling the circulation of small arms and light weapons belongs to the national Governments of countries in whose territory such weapons are produced or are actively circulating.

For our part, we are making the necessary efforts to implement the provisions of the Programme of Action at the national level. The work done in that respect in the last two years has already yielded positive results. In particular, in 2002 alone, over 470,000 units of small arms and light weapons were destroyed in the Russian Federation, of which over 20,000 units were withdrawn from illicit circulation.

There is also a positive dynamic in other respects. At the same time, it has to be recognized that problems are coming to light in the process of implementing the Programme of Action. In our view, it is on those problems that the work of the forthcoming first meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons should focus.

(*Signed*) I. **Ivanov**